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BIDDLE

Memorial Institute,

CHARLOTTE, N. C.

1869-70.

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CHARLOTTE, N. C. 1869-70.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE ON FREEDMEN,
PITTSBURGH, PA., MAY, 1870.

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C. WHITE, -----	“ “
P. WHITE, -----	<i>Alexander, “</i>
S. WHITE, -----	<i>Charlotte, “</i>
J. W. WILLIS, -----	“ “

Circular.

TERMS OF ADMISSION.

The Trustees offer gratuitous instruction, and rooms free of rent, to all young men of color bringing satisfactory testimonials of moral character and talent.

They can provide bedroom furniture for sixty students, free of charge. Candidates for the ministry will receive such aid as their necessities, and the resources at the command of the Faculty will allow, but no student will be aided until he has remained in the Institute one month, and given satisfactory evidence of piety and talent.

No student will be considered a regular member of the Institute, until he has signed the By-Laws, and has paid a fee of one dollar for contingent expenses.

EXPENSES.

A Steward will be appointed by the Trustees, and the board of the students will be fixed at as low a rate as can be afforded. It will not exceed eight dollars per month. All students desiring it will be allowed to board themselves. The expenses can thus be reduced to five or six dollars per month.

TERM AND VACATION.

To enable the students to earn something for their support and to save traveling expenses, there will be but one session, of eight months, commencing on the first Wednesday in September, and closing on the first Wednesday in May.

Students wishing to enter the Institute should make early application.

Address

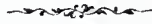
REV. S. MATTOON, President,
Charlotte, N. C.

Contributions either in aid of the Building Fund, or for the support of students, may be sent to

REV. S. C. ALEXANDER,

Charlotte, N. C.,

Or to the Treasurer of the Assembly's Committee on Freedmen.



ORIGIN OF THE B. M. INSTITUTE.

At the close of the war the Freedmen were found exceedingly anxious to be organized into churches of their own. Two difficulties were experienced: 1st, That of securing suitable ministers. 2d, The paucity of means compared with the work to be done. In the spring of 1867, at a meeting of the Missionary Committee of the Catawba Presbytery, with the Secretary of the General Assembly's Committee on Freedmen, after a full discussion of the fields, and methods of successfully prosecuting the work, a resolution was unanimously passed, declaring that an institution to prepare ministers and teachers of the colored race, was not only the most judicious measure to be adopted, but indispensable to the successful prosecution of the work.

At a subsequent meeting of Catawba Presbytery, the resolution of the Missionary Committee was approved, and the Presbytery, though without means at its command, in humble reliance upon the great Head of the Church for success, resolved to take the initiatory steps toward founding such an institution. Rev. S. C. ALEXANDER and Rev. W. L. MILLER were appointed Professors, and to them, in addition to the charge of several churches, was assigned the work of securing funds, and training the first students.



LOCATION.

Many reasons combined to influence the Trustees in the selection of a location. Before the emancipation of the slaves, no seminary of learning for the colored people was tolerated in the South, and the friends of that race were compelled to establish schools

for them far away from the sections inhabited by them. It was thought highly important, since their emancipation, that seminaries should be established in their midst; not only from motives of economy, but on account of the powerful elevating influence exerted by their presence, and the valuable missionary work the students might perform during the time they were under instruction. Charlotte, N. C., one of the most prosperous towns in the South, the terminus of five railroads, in the midst of a large and unusually intelligent colored population, and surrounded by many organized colored churches, was unanimously selected as the location.

CHARTER.

A Board of Trustees was at once organized, and a charter obtained under the laws of the State of North Carolina, by which the Board is legally constituted a corporate body, and empowered to hold the property of the Institute, *in trust for the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. of A.*

PROGRESS AND GROWTH.

During the summer of 1867, three catechist students only were under the instructions of Rev. S. C. ALEXANDER; Rev. W. L. MILLER acting as collecting agent in the North to gather the necessary funds to erect buildings, and support our students who were necessarily dependent, having no means of their own. The plan was adopted then, which has since proved so advantageous, both to the students and the surrounding churches. The students were employed upon their studies during five days of the week, and required to spend Saturdays and Sundays visiting the churches, holding Sabbath-schools and prayer meetings, and, in some instances, Saturday-schools. During the winter session of 1867 and 1868 the number of students increased to 43, twenty-five of whom received aid in various sums from six to one hundred dollars. About the same number were in attendance at the session of 1868 and 1869. During the session closing on the 5th

of May, 1870, the number has very greatly increased, as will be seen in the catalogue. Of these, about one-fourth have received aid, in sums varying from five to one hundred dollars. Seventeen are catechists, and twenty-two are prosecuting their studies with a view to the ministry, and most of the others aim at qualifying themselves for teaching, for which there is a great and pressing demand—much greater, indeed, than we can hope to supply.

BUILDINGS.

The first donation towards founding the Institute, was given by Mrs. MARY L. BIDDLE, of Philadelphia, who gave \$1,400 as a thank-offering for the recovery of a sick child, and also a memorial of her husband, Maj. HENRY J. BIDDLE, who fell, mortally wounded, before Richmond, in the war which resulted in emancipation, and in honor of whom the institution has received its name. With this sum, humble quarters were provided for the teachers, while the church was used as a school-room. A building for the accommodation of students was greatly needed.

In the summer of 1867, Rev. A. C. DENISON, of Conn., who had become acquainted with and deeply interested in the cause, donated his interest in a large building in the city to the institute; the balance was purchased. Col. W. R. MYERS, a citizen of Charlotte, then donated a plot of eight acres of land, in a beautiful grove, on an eminence overlooking the city of Charlotte, and within three-quarters of a mile of its limits, as a site. The materials of the building were transferred to this new location, where it now stands, upon a basement of brick, presenting a neat appearance, and containing school-room enough for more than 100 students, and dormitories and accommodations for 30 to 40. To this has been added, on the same ground, another small dormitory building, containing four rooms; also, two neat and commodious dwellings for the use of the professors; the whole symmetrically arranged, and presenting a neat and tasteful appearance. The whole cost of buildings, under the most rigid economy in the expenditure of means, including furniture, has been about \$13,000; and it is with gratification we add, that the Institute is entirely free from that incubus of public institutions—debt.

ginning to raise it to a collegiate grade, as soon as the advancement of the colored people should require it. *All that has yet been done, has been done with that view, and the time is now near at hand* when the institution should assume a collegiate grade. Her professors are, as yet, supported as teachers and missionaries by the Committee on Freedmen. An endowment, therefore, for the independent and adequate support of her professors, *has become the most imperative want of the institution*; and we are confident that the General Assembly has not spoken too soon in urging this important object upon the attention of the churches, and the liberality of those to whom God has given the means.



CONCLUSION.

The Rev. S. MATTOON, for twenty years a successful missionary in Siam, and late of Balston, N. Y., has been recently elected to the Presidency, and is now in charge as the presiding officer. Under the ripe experience and tried administrative abilities of this honored servant of God, the Trustees and Committee hope for the best results. With him is associated the Rev. S. C. ALEXANDER, as professor, one of the original founders of the Institute, and whose labors, both as a teacher and missionary, have been crowned with marked success.

Owing to the great increase of students, the assistance of a third teacher has become indispensable to the proper work of instruction.

We think, from the statements made in this brief circular, that it must be manifest to all the friends of Christian education among the freedmen, that this institution *stands among the most important agencies in the hands of the Church for the accomplishment of a great work in the elevation and education of the freedmen of the South*. The success already achieved is only a token of what may be yet accomplished. But to realize such results as are demanded by the wants and condition of the freedmen, and, as will be commensurate with the solemn obligations of our branch of the Christian Church, to whom God has committed so much of the world's wealth, there should be endowments for at least two professorships raised at once, and the means of aiding and supporting 150 students, as well as for increasing their accommodations.